

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A steel ~~characterized in that it is~~ which is a ferritic heat-resistant steel containing 15 mass% or less of Cr, in which at least the region up to 10 μm defined by surface depth is made of a worked texture composed of extended ferritic grains or superfine texture composed of ferrites 3 μm or less in grain diameter, and having a protective coating film on the surface.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The steel of Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the shorter diameter of the extended ferritic grains thereof is 5 μm or less.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The steel of Claim 1 ~~or 2, characterized in that~~ wherein the shorter diameter of the extended ferritic grains is 3 μm or less, or the grain diameter of the ferrites is 1 μm or less.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended) A production method for a steel of ~~one of claims 1 to 3,~~ characterized by claim 1 which comprises applying working in the temperature range of from 400 to 800°C to form a worked texture or superfine ferrite grain texture at least in the region up to 10 μm defined by surface depth, and by applying pre-oxidation treatment to form a protective coating film.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The production method of claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the working degree on applying working is 0.7 or higher in true strain.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The production method of claim 4 ~~or 5, characterized by that~~ wherein the pre-oxidation treatment is carried out by holding for 30 to 90 minutes in the temperature range of from 400 to 800°C ~~under the atmosphere.~~